



NOVEMBER 2013

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Every year we update the Arizona Ready Education Report Card with the latest achievement data, review our progress, and streamline our strategies for improvement.

This year, our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading progress is taking center stage as Arizona's Move on When Reading law takes effect. In September, we learned we are still not on track to meet our goal of 94% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders passing the AIMS test by 2020. In 2013, only 75% of our students met or exceeded the standard, showing no movement from last year. We are, however, hopeful that the interventions schools have put into place after receiving k-2 funding increases and the targeted work of Read On Arizona will start to impact these numbers rapidly.

Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade numbers have a very small positive trend. In 2013, only 58% of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students met or exceeded the AIMS standard in math—one point above the previous year. The latest NAEP data released earlier this month shows similar results. Sixty-nine percent of Arizona 8<sup>th</sup> graders achieved at or above basic in math—a one point increase from 2011. Reading remained the same at 71%. So, while reading still remains on track to meet our 2020 goal, math does not.

Of course, we would prefer to see stronger numbers, and there are many ways we all can help our students and schools improve these measures. Much of the assistance can start right from home. Chronic absenteeism is a critical indicator of a student's success, so make sure your child is attending school every day. Reading at home is an essential educational support, so make reading a priority in your household. Always stay connected to your child's teacher. Your partnership with your child's teacher is critical to demonstrating that education is a priority for you, ensuring your child is on track for success, and identifying necessary interventions.

The rest of the community can get involved in other ways. Exploring partnerships with organizations already working in these areas is a great place to start. One such organization is Read On Arizona, which is working to promote and elevate literacy throughout the state. Businesses can always help bring real world relevance to students through career days or by offering applied math internships to math teachers.

It will take a lot of effort and grit to achieve our four goals by 2020, but everyone in the state can and should play a critical role. Teachers and school administrators are working hard to elevate students' achievement levels, but they all need our support to make it happen.



Despite small gains across the last several years, Arizona lags behind both the nation and several of its neighboring states on 8th grade math proficiency.